



ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

Political Leadership

Course Syllabus:
Spring 2013

POL 220
TTh 10:00-11:15
Losekamp 30

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Course Description:

The concept of leadership as applied to politics is much studied but difficult to fully understand. In every society we see linkages between the weak and the strong, yet it is often inexplicable how and why masses attach themselves to particular individuals – thereby attaching their fate to the fortunes and misfortunes of a sole human being. In previous eras, such leadership was justified through the “divine right of kings,” under which leaders proclaimed themselves agents of God.

In the modern age we have seen a rationalization and secularization of political rule; intelligence, style, grace, and charisma are increasingly important factors in determining leadership roles, but this hasn’t necessarily led to more progressive or equitable distributions of power between rulers and subjects. Thus we will not only focus upon the biographical and stylistic aspects of political leadership, but we will also turn our attention to the psychology of followers and why citizens grant legitimacy and authority to some while denying it to others.

Finally, we will also want to examine instances where leadership failed, where otherwise popular men and woman took hold of the reigns of power but were unable to maintain (or otherwise betrayed) the political allegiance of their followers.

Required Texts:

Nassir Ghaemi, *A First-Rate Madness*.
William Lederer and Eugene Burdick, *The Ugly American*.
James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*.
Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*.
John Steinbeck, *In Dubious Battle*.

Supplemental readings will be handed out in class or can be obtained online.

Course Policies:

The first requirement of each student is to understand that this is an academic environment and as such it is necessary that there is a high degree of civility, respect for fellow students, and respect for the material. You are expected to do *all* assigned readings, and you must participate in class if you hope to earn a passing grade.

1. Missed Classes: This course covers a great deal of material and meets just twice a week; therefore repeated absences will not be tolerated. Students are allowed three absences, regardless of circumstance. Subsequent absences will result in your course grade being rescaled down by 1/3; i.e. a student with six absences will have their final grade reduced 1 point on a 4.0 scale.
2. Missed Assignments: If you do not turn in a graded assignment your maximum grade in the course will be rescaled along a 90/80/70/60 scale; i.e. if you fail to hand in a paper worth 20 percent of your grade, your highest possible grade in the class will be a B, regardless of your average on a 4-point scale.
3. Late Papers: Papers will lose one full letter grade per class session late. No exceptions.
4. Plagiarism and Cheating: Neither will be tolerated, and if a student is caught doing either they will fail the course and I will recommend to the Dean of Students that said student be expelled from school.
5. Electronic Devices: the use of any electronic device is strictly prohibited in this course. This includes e-readers, as I will not participate in the demise of the written word.
6. Email: I check my email daily but I prefer not to use it as a means of conversation. Email should be used only for quick, non-emergency questions and for setting up appointments for face-to-face meetings in my office. Also, for institutional as well as technological reasons, only communicate with me via your official @rocky.edu account.

Assessment Outcomes:

In this course, the following History & Political Science major assessment criteria are advanced:

1. Analyze, interpret, and critically evaluate major political issues and/or historical events;
2. Demonstrate familiarity with the major theories and thinkers in the field;
5. Assess, use, and synthesize different kinds of evidence from a variety of academic sources;
6. Understand the difference between opinions and substantiated scholarly claims;
7. Effectively utilize and appropriately cite academic sources;
8. Write papers essentially free of errors in grammar, mechanics, and spelling.

Graded Assignments:

Leadership Profile:

Midway through the semester (2/19, week 7) you are required to produce a basic leadership profile of a historical figure of your choosing (chosen in consultation with the professor). This brief paper will follow the criteria set forth in the text, and is intended to get you started on your research for your final paper. Categories covered will be delineated in a handout.

Annotated Bibliography:

On March 12 (week 9 of the semester) you are required to turn in an annotated bibliography with a minimum of 12 academic sources. Because this is a component of a scholarly paper, bibliographies are to rely exclusively on peer-reviewed, academically credible sources; please note that **internet web pages are not valid sources for academic research**. Final papers will lose one full letter grade per website cited.

Leadership Analysis Paper:

After completing the *Leadership* text, we will read two fictitious accounts of leadership in practice and you are required to write a 5-7 page analysis of both novels through the lens/framework provided by MacGregor Burns. The primary goal is to interrogate the various characters in this novels with a specific focus on the analytical perspective presented throughout the course. A detailed handout will be provided to frame and direct these essays.

Memo to President Obama:

After reading Machiavelli's classic work *The Prince*, you must assume the perspective of the author and compose a formal memo to our president, advising him on the manner in which he should run his administration and manage his political relationships if he hopes to be successful moving forward.

Complete Drafts:

On April 23 (week 15) you are required to submit a *complete* draft of your paper. This version is expected to be polished and worthy of submission for your final grade – yet it will be evaluated and critiqued before final submission, in order to ensure that to the greatest extent possible your final paper is of the highest intellectual caliber and demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of all course materials. Drafts will be graded on a simple pass/fail basis: all complete papers will receive an A, whereas papers that are not finished products will receive an F.

Final Paper:

In lieu of a final exam, you are required to write a short research paper on a historical figure. The paper will be a political leadership biography, and essentially a narrative extension/expansion of your leadership profile. Papers are to be 10-12 pages in length, and must follow the outline format handed out in class.

Note: as with all written assignments, these papers must be composed in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced, with normal one-inch margins. Papers will lose 1/3 of a grade if they exceed the stated limits, are not paginated properly, or are not stapled. Late papers will lose one full grade per day.

Reading Quizzes:

There will be numerous quizzes given throughout the semester, the exact number will depend on rates of participation in course discussions and whether students come to class prepared. Reading quizzes are rudimentary examinations used to determine who is and who is not doing assigned readings; a student who fails a quiz will be counted absent for that class session, thus diminishing their overall grade as delineated in Course Policy 1.

Grading:

All papers and exams will be graded on an A-F scale and will be averaged as follows:

Leadership Profile:	5 percent
Annotated Bibliography:	10 percent
Leadership Analysis:	20 percent
Memo to President Obama:	10 percent
Complete Drafts:	15 percent
Final Paper:	25 percent
Participation:	15 percent

Grading Criteria:

These are the standards I adhere to when I grade essays. Pluses and minuses represent shades of difference, as do split grades (e.g. B-/C+). Grades are based on the evidence of the essay submitted, not on effort or time spent.

A

Excellent in every way (this is not the same as perfect). This is an ambitious, perceptive essay that grapples with interesting, complex ideas; responds discerningly to counter-arguments; and explores well-chosen evidence revealingly. The analysis enhances, rather than underscores, the reader's and writer's knowledge (it doesn't simply repeat what has been taught). There is a context for all the ideas; someone outside the class would be enriched, not confused, by reading the essay. Its introduction opens up, rather than flatly announces, its thesis. Its conclusion is something more than a summary. The language is clean, precise, often elegant. The reader should feel enlightened and educated for having read the paper. There's something new in your analysis, something perhaps only you could have written and explored, in this particular way. The writer's stake in the material is obvious.

B

A piece of writing that reaches high and achieves many of its aims. The ideas are solid and progressively explored but some thin patches require more analysis and/or some stray thoughts don't fit in. The language is generally clear and precise but occasionally not. The evidence is relevant, but there may be too little; the context for the evidence may not be sufficiently explored, so that I have to make some of the connections that the writer should have made clear for me. This is a solid essay whose reasoning and argument may nonetheless be rather routine (the limitation is largely conceptual).

C

A piece of writing that has real problems in one of these areas: conception (there's at least one main idea but it is fuzzy and difficult to understand); structure (non-linear development of your ideas); use of textual evidence (weak or non-existent -- the connections among the ideas and the evidence are not made and/or are presented without context, or are simple platitudes and generalizations); language (the sentences are often awkward, dependent on unexplained abstractions, sometimes contradict each other). The essay may not move forward but rather may repeat its main points, or it may touch upon many (and apparently unrelated) ideas without exploring any of them in sufficient depth and without a developmental flow. Punctuation, spelling, grammar, paragraphing, and transitions may be a problem.

- or- an essay that is largely plot summary or "interpretive summary" of the text, but is written without major problems.
- or- an essay that is chiefly a personal reaction to something. Well-written, but scant intellectual content -- mostly opinion.

D and F

These are efforts that are wildly shorter than they ought to be to grapple seriously with ideas.

- or- those that are extremely problematic in many of the areas mentioned above: aims, structure, use of evidence, language, etc.;
- or- those that do not come close to addressing the expectations of the essay assignment.

Participation:

The majority of class time will be devoted to discussion of the assigned readings. Discussion can include (but is not limited to) an analysis and/or critique of the author's position, a comparison of the assigned work to another text, or debate as to the meaning or merit of a given work (or particular points therein).

Class participation is evaluated on quality rather than quantity. Comments need not mirror the position of the author (or the professor). You are graded not on the "correctness" of your position, but rather on your analysis of the material and your ability to articulate your ideas. You don't have to be at the center of every debate, but students who make little or no effort to enter discussions will receive a lower participation grade. Discussion will become lively, heated even. Always respect the positions of others. When you disagree with someone, be sure to criticize the *idea* and not the person.

Participation will be graded according to the following criteria:

A

The student in this grade range arrives in class each day thoroughly prepared with comments and questions on the assigned reading. Comments reveal that the student has read carefully; this student occasionally initiates the discussion without waiting for the professor to do so. This student does not, however, try to dominate the class, but listens carefully to the remarks made by fellow class members, and responds as readily to these as to the instructor's questions.

B

The student in this grade range participates in most discussions, although not as fully or reliably as the student described above. There is evidence of having done the reading. This student pays attention to the comments of the other students.

C

The student in this grade range participates only intermittently, and is more willing to discuss broad, general questions than to engage in concrete analysis of an assigned text. Sometimes unprepared, this student lacks interest in the ideas of other members of the class, neglects to bring the proper text to class, and is often inattentive.

D or F

The student in this grade range seldom if ever participates.

Things that lower your participation grade:

- * Not paying attention in class
- * A ringing cellphone
- * Talking to your neighbor or holding conversations separate from the class discussion
- * A student who is seen using their phone for any reason will receive an F as their final grade in the course

NOTE: Unlike paper grades, participation will *not* be given plus/minus or split grades, and your final grade is weighted in a manner such as to make it impossible for you to receive an A for the course if your participation grade is not an A.

Semester Schedule:

Week1:

1/8

Introduction and course outline

1/10

Army Leadership Field Manual, Introduction, Chapter 1 “Leadership Defined” (handout)

Week 2:

1/15

MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, Prologue, Chapter 1

1/17

MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, Chapter 2

Week 3:

1/22

MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, Chapter 3

1/24

MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, Chapter 4

Week 4:

1/29

MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, Chapter 5

1/31

MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, Chapter 9

Week 5:

2/5

MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, Chapter 11

2/7

MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, Chapter 14 (385-397)

Week 6:

2/12

MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, Chapter 16

2/14

MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, Chapter 17

Week 7:

2/19

LEADERSHIP PROFILES DUE

2/21

Steinbeck, *In Dubious Battle*, Chapters 1-5

Week 8:

2/26

Steinbeck, *In Dubious Battle*, Chapters 6-11

2/28

Steinbeck, *In Dubious Battle*, Chapters 12-15

3/4-3/8

Midterm Break

Week 9:

3/12

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE
(minimum 12 academic sources)

3/14

Lederer and Burdick, *The Ugly American*, pp. 11-92

Week 10:

3/19

Lederer and Burdick, *The Ugly American*, pp. 93-204

3/21

Lederer and Burdick, *The Ugly American*, pp. 205-285

Week 11:

3/26

LEADERSHIP ANALYSIS PAPERS DUE

3/28

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters IX, XV-XVII

Week 12:

4/2

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters XVIII-XX

4/4

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters XXI-XXIII, XXV

Week 13:

4/9

MEMO TO PRESIDENT OBAMA DUE

4/11

Ghaemi, *A First-Rate Madness*, Introduction

Week 14:

4/16

Ghaemi, *A First-Rate Madness*, Chapters 3, 6, 9

4/18

Ghaemi, *A First-Rate Madness*, Chapter 15, Epilogue

Week 15:

4/23

DRAFTS DUE

4/25

Drafts Returned

4/30

REVISED RESEARCH PAPERS DUE